

Western Canada Drought

the 1984 election made all sorts of campaign promises regarding agriculture. The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) and others went into the flood of areas of Saskatchewan, which are much closer to my home, and made all sorts of promises unbelievably stretching credibility. If you look at the number of votes given to the Liberal candidate in that area, you will know just how we in Saskatchewan regard the Liberal Party and how credible anything his Party says about agriculture in Saskatchewan really is.

The Hon. Member for Yorkton—Melville talked about the number of farmers who feel aggrieved. Obviously there will be people who say their areas should have been covered. Their area should have had more consideration. Obviously the Member is well aware, and equally obviously he would not point it out because he is a Member of the NDP, that the Minister announced the establishment of a review board with a mandate to hear from producers in areas in which feel they should be included. I thought his figures were interesting. He mentioned 12,000 farmers. I am not sure that this is an accurate figure I thought it was interesting because for years I saw 70,000 Saskatchewan farmers concerned about every single act of omission on the part of a Liberal federal Government. We would not have had farmers with these kinds of problems if we had had a Government in Ottawa that cared or even knew the faintest thing about Saskatchewan agriculture.

I do not want to get overly political, Mr. Speaker. You know it is not my nature to be political in this Chamber.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Gormley: I just want it on the record that when I hear a Liberal talking about Saskatchewan farmers I really must express my outrage. The Liberal Government in Ottawa for all these years did precious little, arguably nothing, to help the Saskatchewan farmer.

In appointing his Parliamentary Secretary as the individual responsible for formulating a response to the drought, I think the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) showed remarkable insight. He showed it in his faith in the system and in having a Member of Parliament head the task force. He also showed his insight by appointing a Member who knows what it is like firsthand. I think the Prime Minister showed a refreshingly clear and different way of addressing the problem.

Mr. Rossi: Ask him why he does not table the report.

Mr. Gormley: That Member has given us a three-phase approach to the drought problem. The first phase, which was quickly acted upon, dealt with livestock drought assistance. This program earmarked some \$48 million—

Mr. Nystrom: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the motion before the House is whether or not this report should be made public. Should the Member who is speaking now not be talking to the motion, which is whether or not this document should be made public?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am sure the Hon. Member will speak to the motion.

Mr. Gormley: Hearing a New Democrat invoke the rule of relevance stretches credibility again. I am talking about drought assistance, and particularly why the Hon. Member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, the great Saskatchewan agronomist, desires these documents. If he looks at the result of the recommendations to the Prime Minister he will see that the prairie farmer, the Saskatchewan farmer in particular, is being dealt with in a compassionate, understanding and realistic way. We had the Livestock Drought Assistance Program involving \$48 million. This was the first program addressed in the recommendation of the task force to the Prime Minister. Phase 2 involved \$150 million under the Crop Disaster Assistance Program. The Hon. Member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell did not say that today, May 20, 1986, the final portion of that \$150 million is going to be paid out to farmers, amounting to some \$64 million. I did not hear that from the Hon. Member.

The third phase involved a long-term method of dealing effectively with drought and, for that matter, all other natural disasters. Just two weeks ago the Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, along with the federal Government, made the announcement that there would be a means to deal in the long term with natural disasters such as drought in the farm economy. When this report was made to the Prime Minister we had to take into account what the Province of Saskatchewan was doing. That was a hard act to follow. The Province of Saskatchewan allowed a \$125 per head cash advance of livestock. It had a \$60 a head grant for livestock producers in severe drought areas. It had a \$25 per cultivated acre loan for all Saskatchewan farmers. There was a gas tax rebate when the province, as everyone knows, with a Conservative Government, eliminated the gas tax. Grant Devine is a farmer. Unlike any other Premier in Canada, I think he has a sensitivity to farmers and this was a difficult act to follow. However, the Hon. Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Gustafson) advised the Prime Minister on three recommendations which the Prime Minister followed, and these are accommodating the concerns of Saskatchewan farmers.

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell (Mr. Boudria) has put before the House an excellent motion calling on the Government to table the report of the Hon. Member for Assiniboia which he prepared for the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) I have had an opportunity to visit that province and others in the West and people there really want to see the report. They want to see it because there were, as the Hon. Member mentioned, reports in the papers, such as *The Star-Phoenix* of August 16, 1985, which said, "Tory Drought Aid a Sleazy Operation". I knew that could not apply to the Hon. Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Gustafson). I have known him for years and I know that he was one of the 19 people who supported the Prime Minister in the leadership race. I knew that had nothing to do with his being appointed Parliamentary